

HIS
MAJESTIES
DECLARATION

To all His loving Subjects, upon
occasion of the late Ordinance
and Declaration of the

Lords and Commons

For the Assessing all such who
have not contributed sufficiently for
raising of Money, Plare, &c.

Charles R.

Our expresse pleasure is, That this Our Declaration be published in all Churches and Chapels within the Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales; by the Parsons, Vicars or Curates of the same.

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By LEONARD LICHFIELD

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1644

His MAJESTIES
DECLARATION

To all His loving Subjects upon
occasion of the late Ordinance and
Declaration for Assesments



It would not be believed (at least great pains have been taken that it might not) that the pretended Ordinance of the *Militia* (the first attempt that ever was to make a Law by Ordinance without Our consent) of the keeping Us out of *Hall*, and taking Our Arms and Munition from Us, could any way concern the Interest, Property, or Liberty of the Subject, and it was confessed by that desperate Declaration it self of the 26. of *May*, That if they were found guilty of that charge of destroying the title and interest of Our Subjects to their Lands and Goods, it were indeed a very great Crime. But it was a strange fatall Lethargy which had seized Our good People, and kept them from discerning, that the Nobility, Gentry, Commonalty of *England*, were not only stripped of their preeminences and privileges, but of their Liberties and Estates, when Our just Rights were denyed Us, and that no Subject could from thenceforth expect to dwell at home, when We were driven from Our Houses and Our Towns. It was not possible, that a Commission could be granted to the Earl of *Essex*, to raise an Army against Us, and for the safety of Our Person, and preservation of the peace of the Kingdom, to pursue, kill and slay Us and all who will well to Us, but that in a short time inferior Commanders, by the same Authority, would require Our good Subjects for the maintenance of the property of the Subject, to supply them with such summes of Money as they think fit, upon the penalty of being plundered with all extremity of Warre, as the stile of Sir *Edward Bayntons* Warrant runnes against Our poor Subjects.

Subjects in *Wiltshire*) and by such Rules of unlimited Arbitrary Power, as inconsistent with the least pretence or shadow of that Property it would seem to defend; yet would only *LA. COMM.*
 If there could be yet any understanding so foolish and supine to believe, That these Disturbers of the publick peace do intend anything but a generall confusion, they have brought them a sad Argument to their own doors to convince them; after this Ordinance and Declaration, 'tis not in any sober mans power to believe himself worth any thing, or that there is such a thing as Law, Liberty, Property left in *England*, under the Jurisdiction of these men, and the same power that robs them now of the Twentieth part of their Estates, hath by what but made a claim and entitled it self to the other Nineteen, when it shall be thought fit to hasten the generall ruine. Sure, if the minde of all men be not stubbornly prepared for servitude, they will look on this Ordinance as the greatest Prodigy of Arbitrary Power and Tyranny, that any Age hath brought forth in any Kingdom, other Grievances (and the greatest) have been conceived intollerable, rather by the Logique and Consequence, then by the Pressure it self, this at once sweeps away all, that the Wisdom and Justice of Parliaments have provided for them. Is their Property in their Estates (so carefully looked to by their Ancestors, and so amply established by Us against any possibility of Invasion from the Crown) which makes the meanest Subject as much a Lord of his own as the greatest Peer, to be valued or considered? Here is a Twentieth part of every mans Estate (or so much more as four men will please to call the Twentieth part) taken away at once, and yet a Power left to take a Twentieth still of that which remains, and this to be levied by such circumstances of severity, as no Act of Parliament ever consented to. Is their liberty which distinguishes Subjects from Slaves, and in which this free-born Nation hath the Advantage of all Christendom, dear to them? They shall not only be imprisoned in such places of this Kingdom, (a multitude of Judgement no Court can challenge to it self in any Cases) but for so long time as the Committee of the House of Commons for examination shall appoint and order; the House of Commons it self having never assumed, or in the least degree pretended to a power of Judicature, having none more Authority to administer an Oath (the only way to discover and strike out the truth of facts) to, than to cut off the heads of any of Our Subjects; and this Committee being so

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farre from being a part of the Parliament, that it is destructive to the whole, by usurping to it self all the power of the King, Lords, and Commons. All who know any thing of Parliaments know that a Committee of either House ought not by the Law to publish their own Resolves, neither are their conclusions of any force without the Confirmation of the House, which hath the same power of controlling them, as if the matter had never been debated; but that any Committee should be so contracted (as this of Examination, a silent Committee ever be before this Parliament) as to exclude the Members of the House, who are equally trusted by their Country, from being present at the Councells, is so monstrous to the priviledges of Parliament, that it is no more in the power of any man to give up that freedom, then of himself to order, that from that time the place for which he serves, shall never more send a Knight or Burgess to the Parliament, and in truth is no less then to alter the whole frame of Government, to pull up Parliaments by the Roots, and to commit the Lives, Liberties, and Estates of all the People of *England* to the Arbitrary power of a few unqualified Persons, who shall dispose thereof according to their discretion, without account to any Rule or authority whatsoever.

Are their friends, their wives, and children (the greatest blessings of Peace and the comforts of Life) pretious to them? would even their penury and imprisonment be less grievous by those cordials? they shall be divorced from them, banished, and shall no longer remain within the Cities of *London* and *W. stminster*, the Suburbs and the Counties adjacent, and how farre those adjacent Counties shall extend no man knows.

Is there any thing now left to enjoy, but the Liberty to Rebel and destroy one another? are the outward blessings of life of Peace, Property, and Liberty, taken, and forced from Our Subjects? are their Consciences free and unassaulted by the violence of these fire brands? sure the Liberty and freedom of Conscience cannot suffer by these means. Alas! all these punishments are imposed upon them because they will not submit to Actions contrary to their naturall Loyalty, to their Oathes of Allegiance and Supremacy, and to their late voluntary Presentation, which obliges them to the care of Our Person and Our just Rights. How many Persons of Honour, Quality, and Reputation of the severall Counties of *England* are now imprisoned, without any objection against them, but suspicion of their Loyalty? how many of the

the greatest and most substantial Liberties of London, by whom the Government and Discipline of that City was preserved, are disarmed, robbed, and imprisoned, without any Process of Law, or colour of accusation, but of obedience to the Law and Government of the Kingdom? whilst Anabaptists and Brownists with the assistance of vicious and debauched persons of desperate Fortunes, take upon them to break up and rife houses, as publique and avowed Ministers of a newly invented Authority. How many godly, pious, and painfull Divines, whose lives and learning hath made them of reverend Estimation, are now slandered with inclination to Popery, discountenanced, and imprisoned for discharging their Conscience in instructing the people in the Christian duty of Religion and Obedience, whilst Schismaticall, Illiterate, and scandalous Preachers, fill the Pulpits and Churches with Blasphemy, Irreverence, and Treason, and incite their Auditory to nothing but Murther and Rebellion. We passe over the vulgar charm, by which they have captivated such who have been contented to dispense with their consciences for the preservation of their Estates, and by which they perswade men cheerfully to part with this twentieth part of the Estate to the good work in hand, for whoever will give what he hath, may scape robbing. *They shall be repaid upon the publique Faith, & all other monyes lent upon the Propositions of both Houses* it may be so, but men must be condemned to a strange uncertainty who will lend upon such security. The publique Faith indeed, is as great an earnest as the State can give, and engages the Honour, Reputation and Honesty of the Nation, and is the Act of the Kingdom, 'tis the security of the King, the Lords and Commons, which can never need an Executor, can never dye, never be Bankrupt, and therefore We willingly consented to it for the Indemnity of Our good Subjects of Scotland, (who We hope will not think the worse of it, for being so often and so cheaply mentioned since.) But that a Vote of one or both Houses should be an engagement upon the publique Faith, is as impossible, as that the Committee of the House of Commons for Examinations, should be the High Court of Parliament.

And what is or can be said with the least shadow of reason to justify these Extravagances? We have not lately heard of should fundamentall Laws which used to warrant the Innovations, this needs a Rhetoric even below those foundations. They will say they cannot manage these great undertakings without such extraordinary ways. We think so

ted, but that proves only they have undetaken somewhat they ought
 not to undertake, that it is lawfull for them to do any thing that
 is convenient for those ends. We rememberd them long ago, and We
 cannot do it too often, of that excellent Speech of Mr. Pym. *The Law*
is that which puts a difference betwixt good and evil, betwixt just and un-
just, if you take away the Law, all things will fall into a confusion, every
man will become a Law unto himselfe, which in the depraved condition of
humane Nature, must needs produce many great Enormities, Lust will be-
come a Law, and Envy will become a Law, Covetousnesse and Ambition
will become Laws, and what Dissates, what Decisions such Laws will
produce may easily be discerned. It may indeed by the sad instances over
the whole Kingdom. But will Posterity believe, that in the same
 Parliament this Doctrine was avowed with that Acclamatory and
 these instances after produced. That in the same Parliament such care
 was taken that no man should be committed in what case soever, with-
 out the cause of his Imprisonment expressed, and that all men should
 be immediately bailed in all Cases bailable, and during the same Par-
 liament that Alderman *Pullington*, or indeed any body else, but the
 sworn Ministers of Justice, should imprison whom they would;
 and for what they would, and for as long time as they would;
 That the King should be reproached with breach of Privilege for ac-
 cusing Sir *John Horham* of high Treason, when with force of Arms
 he kept Him out of *Hull*, and despised Him to His face, because in no
 case a Member of either House might be committed or accused without
 leave of that House, of which he is a Member, and yet that during the
 same Parliament, the same Alderman should commit the *Earl of*
Middlesex (a Peer of the Realm) and the Lord *Buckhurst* (a Member
 of the House of Commons) to the Counter without reprehension,
 that to be a Traytor (which is defined, and every man understands)
 should be no crime, and to be called Malignant (which no body knows
 the meaning of) should be ground enough for close imprisonment;
 That a Law should be made, that whosoever should presume to take
 Tunnage and Poundage without an Act of Parliament, should incurre
 the penalty of a Premure, and the same Parliament, that the same
 imposition should be laid upon Our Subjects, and taken by an Order
 of both Houses, without and against Our Consent. Lastly, That the
 same Parliament, a Law should be made to declare the proceedings
 and judgement upon Ship-Money to be illegall and voyd, and during

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that Parliament, that an Order of both Houses shall, upon pretence of necessity, enable four men to take away the twentieth part of their Estates from all their Neighbours, according to their discretion.

But Our good Subjects will no longer look upon this and the like Rebellions, as upon the Councils and conclusions of both Our Houses of Parliament, though all the world knows even that Authority can never justify things unwarrantable by the Law; they well know how few of the Persons trusted by them are present at their consultations, but above 100 not 20, and of the House of Peers, not a fifth part, that they who are present enjoy not the Privilege and Freedom of Parliament, but are besieged by an Army, and awed by the same Tumults, which drive Us and their fellow Members from thence, to consent to what some few seditions, Schismaticall Persons amongst them do propose; These are the men, who joining with the Anabaptists and Brownists of *London*, first changed the Government and Discipline of that City, and now, by the pride and power of that City would undo the Kingdom, whilst their Lord Mayor (a Person accused and known to be guilty of high Treason) by a new Legislative Power of his own, suppresses and reviles the Book of Common-Prayer, robs, and imprisons whom he thinks fit, and with the rabble of his Faction gives Laws to both Houses of Parliament, and tells them they will have no Accomodation, whilst the Members sent and excluded by their Countreys, are expelled the House, or committed for refusing to take the oath of Association, to live and dye with the Earl of *Essex*, as very lately Sir *Sidney Mountague*. These are the men who have presumed to send Ambassadors, and to enter into Treaties with foreign States in their own behalfs, having at this time an Agent of their own with the States of *Holland*, to negotiate for them upon private instructions. These are the men, who not thinking they have yet brought mischief enough upon this Kingdom, at this time invite and sollicite Our Subjects of *Scotland* to enter this Land with an Army against Us. In a word, These are the men who have made this last devouring Ordinance to take away all Law, Liberty, and Property from Our people, and have by it really acted that upon Our people, which with infinite malice and violence was formerly intended by the Commissioners of *Arras* to have been Our Intention by the Commissions of *Arras*.

We have done; What Power and Authority these men have, or will have, We know not, for Our Self We challenge none such; We

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Look upon the Pressures and Inconveniences Our good Subjects bear, even by Us and Our Army, (which the Army first raised by them enforced Us to levy in Our defence, and their refusal of all offers and desires of Treaty enforceth Us to keep) with very much sadness of heart; We are so farre from requiring a twentieth part of their Estates (though for their own visible preservation) that we have already sold or pawned Our own Jewels, and coynded Our own Plate; so We are willing to sell all Our own Land, and Houses for their relief: yet We do not doubt but Our good Subjects will seriously consider Our Condition and their own Duties, and think Our readinesse to protect them with the utmost hazard of Our Life, deserves their readinesse to assist Us with some part of their Fortunes; and whilst other men give a twentieth part of their Estates, to enable them to forfett the other nineteen, that they will extend themselves to Us in a liberall and free proportion for the preservation of the rest, and for the maintenance of Gods true Religion, the Laws of the Land, the Liberty of the Subject, and the safety and very being of Parliaments, and this Kingdom: for if all these ever were, or can be in manifest danger, tis new in this present Rebellion against Us.

Lastly, We will and require all Our loving Subjects of what degree or quality soever, as they will answer into God, to Us, and to posterity, by their Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, as they would not be looked upon now, and remembered hereafter, as betrayers of the Laws and Liberty they were born to, that they in no degree submit to this wilde pretended Ordinance, and that they presume not to give any encouragement or assistance to the Army now in Rebellion against Us, which if notwithstanding they shall do, they must expect from Us the severest punishment the Law can inflict, and a perpetuall Infamy with all good men.

And We do hereby require all Our loving Subjects, that they in no degree submit to this wilde pretended Ordinance, and that they presume not to give any encouragement or assistance to the Army now in Rebellion against Us, which if notwithstanding they shall do, they must expect from Us the severest punishment the Law can inflict, and a perpetuall Infamy with all good men.

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